

Reviews

Learning About Teaching Through Clinical Supervision

Edited by W. John Smyth
Wolfeboro, New Hampshire:
Croom Helm Ltd., 1986

—Reviewed by Patricia M. Dombart, Butler Senior High School, Butler, Pennsylvania

This collection of essays presents clinical supervision in its purest, most powerful form. The authors and their editor share a commitment to the practice of clinical supervision as intended by Cogan and Goldhammer. The essays focus on its history and epistemology to show that authentic clinical supervision involves "collegial collaboration," "teacher autonomy," and "reflective practice," and is not "a technical tool for quick-fix evaluation" nor a "research-based checklist" for inspecting a "prescribed teaching model."

Classroom teachers will be encouraged by the insistence on teacher empowerment and integrity as critical elements of clinical supervision. Teachers, supervisors, and administrators will find this book an invaluable guide to the essence of clinical supervision. For those who dwell in the no-money, no-time reality of most public schools, however, it is a bittersweet reminder of what could be, but isn't.

Available from Croom Helm Ltd., 27 S. Main St., Wolfeboro, NH 03894, for \$27.50.

The Practice of Teaching

Philip W. Jackson
New York:

Teachers College Press, 1986

—Reviewed by Craig Kridel, University of South Carolina, Columbia

So much has been written about teaching that one often becomes dulled either by the repetition of the prose or the simplicity of the writer's perspective. In many instances, the act of teaching is sanitized and simplistically criticized or supported. *The Practice of Teaching* is an exception. Reading it reminded me of the awe and wonder I felt when I first read Jackson's classic, *Life in Classrooms*, in which the familiar takes on an exalted

and wonderfully complex demeanor. His insights were numerous and stunning. The same is true of this collection of six independent essays. Jackson's teachings are not lecture-essays but, rather, adventures into teaching and education. We are invited to stroll with Jackson as he meanders through ideas, stopping to consider the commonplace or unnoticed in unique and important ways.

Each chapter presents paradoxes of teaching that Jackson has wanted to address throughout his career. Chapter One, "On Knowing How to Teach," questions many of our deceptively simple assumptions that do, indeed, prove untrustworthy. Chapter Two, "How to Talk to Teachers," is actually an examination of William James' talks to teachers. To describe Jackson's thoughts as outright revelatory is not an overstatement. Chapters Three and Four consider the uncertainties of teaching and whether "real teaching" can ever be defined. It is impossible to observe teachers in the same way after reading Jackson's reflections. Chapter Five considers the future of teaching, and Jackson concludes with a chapter on two alternative traditions for the field of teaching and education.

I hope all educators will stroll with Jackson and participate in his reflections on *The Practice of Teaching*.

Available from Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027, for \$18.95 hardcover, \$9.95 paper.

Teaching Mathematics: Strategies That Work

Edited by Mark Driscoll and Jere Confrey
Portsmouth, New Hampshire:
Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.,
1986

—Reviewed by Philip L. Hosford, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces

Teachers writing to teachers about a pedagogy of mathematics is the major appeal of this collection of 21 chapters. Topics cover a wide spectrum including manipulatives, computer software, math labs, games, underprepared students, special programs, and problem solving.

Beyond the specific procedures offered in individual chapters, a consistent theme is that teaching mathematics is a process that is active, serious, dedicated, success-oriented, and constantly improving. Within this volume are valuable suggestions for energizing, organizing, preparing, and presenting the curriculum, as well as for improving teacher/student listening and decision making. Teachers from the kindergarten to college level will gain new ideas for teaching mathematics.

Teaching Mathematics is a smorgasbord—but it thematically portrays mathematics education as a lively human activity based on the premise that one sure way to improve our own teaching is to learn from each other.

Available from Heinemann Educational Books Inc., 70 Court St., Portsmouth, NH 03801, for \$12.50.

Regaining Excellence in Education

Mario D. Fantini
Columbus, Ohio

Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co.,
1986

—Reviewed by William Leary, Broward County Public Schools, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

If you are not into "educational excellence" these days, you may be accused of being passé. Mario Fantini has joined the debate by summarizing for the general reader past and present educational reform movements. He interprets the responses of schools to these changes over the years and compares them with similar trends in private enterprise.

Fantini then reviews definitions of excellence using an equation that includes quality, equality, effectiveness, efficiency, and participation. He also emphasizes the role of parents and the community in consolidating school reforms. Fantini concludes by summarizing the roles of professional educators in the excellence movement and offers a comprehensive approach to renewing the teaching profession.

Available from Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., Columbus, OH 43216, for \$23.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

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